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Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: July Report and August Sermons

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Churches of Christ **salute † you**



JULY REPORT AND
AUGUST SERMONS — 1955

HERALD OF TRUTH

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

GEORGE H. STEPHENSON

Radio Sermon 184

August 7, 1955

"It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matthew 4:4.

Following the baptism of Jesus, we read that he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. In the New Testament, we read, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus was tempted in order that He might understand the temptations we have, and that He might make intercession for us at the throne of God.

Jesus was hungry following a forty days' fast, but He refused to yield to Satan's suggestion to satisfy His hunger by turning stones into bread. In resisting temptation, He quoted from the words of Moses found in Deuteronomy 8:3 that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

These words quoted by Jesus need to be studied again and again in our day. We are living in a day when too many have allowed the material to crowd out the spiritual. Too many, today, prefer cash to character. Too many of our day have forgotten that time is not as important as eternity and that our souls are worth more than all the world.

While the Bible places the emphasis on the spiritual needs of man, we must not overlook the fact that it does not ignore man's physical needs. While it teaches, "Man doth not live by bread alone," it does recognize the fact that "man lives by bread."

Our physical bodies require food, and God recognizes this need. In the model prayer which Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He included the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." Jesus did not send away the hungry multitudes who heard Him preach, but multiplied the loaves and fishes of a boy and fed them. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He remembered the physical needs of His own mother and made provision for her comfort and welfare by entrusting her to the care and keeping of the beloved John. The first question Jesus asked of His disciples following His resurrection was, "Children, have ye ought to eat?" (John 21:5).

God recognizes the need man has for bread, and thus He teaches us in His word that we should work in order that we may have the needs of life. We read in I Thessalonians 4:11,12, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." The Bible teaches us that we should provide for the needs of our own in these

words, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8).

God provides for our physical needs by blessing the earth with abundant harvests. The soil of our own land produces so abundantly that leaders in agriculture still feel that it is to the best interest of our economy to limit the amount of acreage our farmers may plant in many crops. If we did not have this curtailment of production there would be a surplus of many food commodities. A few years ago, it was reported that our government at that time had on hand 76 million pounds of eggs, 50 million bushels of potatoes, and enough surplus wheat to bake twelve loaves of bread for every man, woman, and child in the entire world. Truly, in this great land of ours, God has abundantly blessed us with food.

While we are grateful for our abundance of food, we need to realize that man needs more than eggs and potatoes and wheat. Man does not live by bread alone. Man is of a dual nature. He has an outer and an inner man (II Corinthians 4:16). Just as my outer man hungers and thirsts for bread and water, my inner man hungers and thirsts for that which God alone can supply—the bread and the water of life. Right thinking people must answer in the affirmative this question asked by our Saviour, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25).

In the long ago, Esau made the tragic blunder of trying to live by bread alone. Coming in from the field, tired and hungry, all he could think of for the moment was food, and thus he forfeited his birthright. We read these significant words concerning Esau, "And he did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way" (Genesis 25:34). These words concerning Esau contain the summary of all too many lives today. "He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way." Suppose we were trying to enact a drama of Esau's life. No talented actor would be needed to play the role of Esau. Most any ape could act out the part. As a matter of fact, a pig could do about as well. He could "eat, and drink, and rise up and go his way." Are you, like Esau of the long ago, selling your birthright by allowing your material needs to so occupy your time and thinking that they have crowded out the spiritual? Have you, in your efforts to succeed in this life, forgotten about the life to come? Have you, in your busy life, forgotten God?

We have heard it said that a dog is man's best friend. It is true that a dog may remain loyal to us, when earthly friends betray us. The loyalty of a dog for his master has inspired orators and poets alike. But as much as we love our dog, surely man does not want to live merely on the level of his dog. We can share many things with our dog—the food we have on our table, and even the house in which we may live, but there are some things we can never share with our dog. We have our hopes, our dreams, our aspirations, our ideals, which mean nothing to our dog. We may hear music which stirs us and sermons which edify us, but the dog would rather gnaw on his bone.

One day when large numbers had come together to hear Jesus,

He was interrupted in His teaching by a man who felt his brother had mistreated him. The man asked Jesus to speak to his brother that he divide his inheritance with him. How many brothers have been alienated and filled with bitterness and hatred because of real or imaginary grievances over an inheritance! Jesus did not attempt to settle this or any other civil dispute, but He did use this as an occasion to teach the lesson which men have found hard to learn that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Jesus told about a man who was highly successful if he should be judged by the usual standards of the world. Listen to the words concerning this man, "The ground of a certain man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:16-20).

While the world might congratulate such a man as described by our Lord, Jesus did not hesitate to call him a fool. Now, Jesus did not call the man a fool just because he was rich. Jesus never taught that it was wrong to possess money or property. Jesus did not place a premium on poverty. He had friends among the rich and some of God's saints in every age have been blessed with material prosperity. Jesus did not call the rich farmer a fool because of the manner in which he acquired his wealth nor for his efforts to safely store his goods. But the farmer was called a fool, primarily, because he thought he could live on bread alone, that the crops stored up in his barns could satisfy the needs of his never-dying soul.

This man's life, like many another, ended in sudden and unexpected death. This rich farmer thought he had a lease on life. He resolved to tear down his old barns and build new ones and thus "for many years" he could eat, drink, and be merry. But that day was his last day. The God whom he had ignored called him to account and said, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Every gospel preacher could repeat true stories of our own day which are duplicates of this story Jesus told in the long ago. We know what it is to be called into the sorrowing home where the cold, icy hand of Death has unexpectedly snatched a loved one. And we know, too, how helpless we feel as we grope for words to speak to shocked loved ones of those who have suddenly been called from this world without hope. Again and again we see lives taken from those who are so busy trying to get ahead, accumulate a little more and a little more, and all the while forgetting God, and their souls, and eternity. Had the rich farmer lived for many more years, he still would have been a fool to think his soul could be satisfied by the crops in his barns. And Jesus says, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

An interesting account of the lives of some highly successful

financiers was prepared by a millionaire and appeared in a number of religious journals. It was reported that this group of highly successful men had a meeting together in a prominent hotel in Chicago in the year 1923. Present for the meeting were: The president of the largest independent steel company; the president of the largest utility company; the greatest wheat speculator; the president of the New York stock exchange; a member of the president's cabinet; the greatest "bear" in Wall Street; the president of the Bank of International Settlements; the head of the world's greatest monopoly. Collectively, these men controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury at that time. For years, newspapers and magazines had been printing their success stories and urging the youth of the nation to follow their examples.

Twenty-five years later, in 1948, let us see what had happened to these men. The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died broke.

The president of the largest utility company, Samuel Insull, died broke and in semi-disgrace.

The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died abroad, and was insolvent.

The man who had served as president of the Stock Exchange had paid his debt to society by serving time for a while in Sing Sing Prison.

The member of the President's cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.

The greatest "bear" in Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, committed suicide.

The president of the Bank of International Settlements, Leon Frazier, committed suicide.

The head of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivan Krueger, committed suicide.

These men learned how to make money, but they failed to learn how to live. From the mistakes they made, let us learn that man does not live by bread alone. Jesus asked, "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

We must live by "every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." God's word contains food for the soul. God's word is not just a luxury; it is a necessity. My soul must feed upon the Word of God, or else my soul shall die.

We believe that God's Word may be found in the Bible. Concerning the Scriptures, Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Scriptures, therefore, are entirely adequate for supplying the spiritual needs of man. They do not furnish partly, but completely, the man of God unto every good work. Our need for today is not some new religion or some new revelation. Just as the food God has given us still satisfies man's physical hunger, the Word of God still satisfies man's spiritual hunger.

The Bible is not just a book among books; it is the Book. It is the only book which can tell us of our origin, that we came from God; and which can tell us of our duty: that we are here to serve God and our fellow man; and which tells us of our destiny, to dwell with God throughout eternity.

Man may see evidence of a Creator in Nature, but he cannot know the nature of this Creator without a knowledge of the Bible. In reality, all that anyone knows, or that he may need to know, about God, is found in the Bible. Furthermore, all that anyone knows, or that he needs to know, about Christ, may be found in the Bible. All that anyone knows, or that he needs to know, about the church, may be found in the Bible. All that anyone knows, or that he needs to know, about the plan of salvation, may be found in the Bible. All that anyone knows, or that he needs to know, about heaven, or about hell, may be found in the Bible.

In churches of Christ, you will find a group of people, earnestly striving to exalt the Bible in our worship and in our teaching. It is our aim not only to live by some of the word of God, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. While keenly conscious of our weaknesses and failures as individuals, we believe that the Bible as our guide is a perfect standard.

If you would like to be associated with a group of Bible believing, Bible loving people, we would be happy for you to investigate our plea and to study with us the Word of our Lord. In His Word you will find that you are to believe in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). You will also find you are to repent of your sins. "I tell you, nay; except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). You will find that you are to confess Christ. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). You will also read that you are to be baptized. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). With a faith in your heart which leads you to obey these commands of our Lord, you will be a Christian. As a Christian, follow these words of Peter, "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). If you will continue to be guided by the principles of God's Word, your life will be a happy life and a useful life. And when you come to the end of this life, the Bible, having provided for you the greatest source of strength and joy in this world, will provide for you an entrance into that Kingdom of eternal joy and bliss in the world which is to come.

HOW TO SELECT A CHURCH

By DON GARDNER

Radio Sermon No. 185

August 14, 1955

Recently an article on the question of "how to select a family doctor" appeared in a national magazine. Inasmuch as my family and I have lived in three South African and two American cities in seven years this business of selecting a family doctor has been a frequent problem. It occurred to me, while reading this discussion, that men are likewise confronted with the problem of selecting a church. A multiplicity of religious groups constantly work to enlist persons such as you upon their roll books.

Perhaps you recognize the importance of having a church connection but have not yet become a member of any religious group. Or, you may not be perfectly satisfied with the church you have chosen. Hence, may we study with you the urgent question of how to select a church?

Notice first that there are

I. SOME THINGS WHICH SHOULD NOT GOVERN YOUR SELECTION. In deciding where you and your family will worship God, certain things should not be a part of the set of facts which governs your selection.

1. First, one should not select a church because it is the most convenient. Many feel that there is no difference in religious bodies and thus it is best to attend services at the church nearest one's place of residence. This may well serve as a factor in selecting a shop from which to purchase your groceries but it is hardly a logical—or Scriptural reason for becoming a member of a church. One must act, in religion, out of conviction and not from convenience.

Parents send their children to the Sunday School nearest them. It is like entrusting one's sick child to the care of the doctor living next door because he is closest without considering his qualifications. The group meeting near you may be teaching the truth; it may not be. Since all serious minded people want to please God they should first investigate what is taught and determine if this teaching accords with the Bible before making a decision.

2 Second, one should not select a church because it has the largest membership. Frequently one hears a person boast concerning the largeness of his church saying, "So many millions could not be wrong." The number of persons who believe a thing does not determine whether it is true or false; an error multiplied by a million is still an error.

Indeed, the Scriptures lead us to believe that in many instances the side of the minority is the side of God. Jesus declared, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto

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life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). Does Christ's language cause you to conclude that the action of the masses will furnish a safe guide? No, indeed not! Accept not therefore a church because of its huge membership.

3. Third, one should not select a church because one likes the preacher. Who would select his mechanic solely on the ground of his likeability? Though this may enter into the selection one would want assurance that the mechanic could properly repair his automobile.

A preacher may have a sparkling personality with great persuasive power but that same preacher may be in error. He may be like Apollos concerning whom we read in the Scriptures: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:24-26).

Apollos was an eloquent man capable of not only convincing the intellect but of moving the emotions as well. He had a certain knowledge of the Scriptures; but it was imperfect. Thus it became necessary for a Christian couple to teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly. Ever bear in mind: Your preacher may be in error and hence ought not to be followed blindly.

Preachers of the church of Christ do not ask you or any man to follow them or to accept anything they say because they say it. However, if what they preach is taught in the Scriptures then your loyalty to God's truth will cause you to submit to it, not because they preached it but because it is the truth.

4. Fourth, one should not select a church solely on the recommendation of one's parents, husband or wife. Your selection of a doctor, for instance, may rest largely on the advice of parents. But the religion of the Bible is a personal matter. Paul put it thus, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). One ought therefore to determine for himself if a religious body is Scriptural and consequently pleasing to God.

If men say to us, "You are members of the church of Christ because your parents were," we respond: Both in private and in public we emphasize to all, that in obeying the gospel of Christ and in thus becoming members of His church one must act from a proper personal understanding of the truth.

Sometimes two persons marry who hold different religious views. To keep peace they "join another church" or one of the partners meekly forsakes his church and joins that of his companion. As deplorable as religious division in the home is, the solution just mentioned is not the remedy. Would it not be more noble for these two persons to sit down with the Bible, evaluate their beliefs in its light and then come

to conclusions that are in accord with the Scriptures. Let both adopt the attitude of the Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). If a couple must compromise on the brand of automobile they buy to keep peace, let them do so. But never let them sacrifice convictions.

We now turn to

II. PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE IN SELECTING A CHURCH.

In selecting a doctor, for instance, there is no infallible rule. Fortunately, there is an infallible book which will guide us as we determine what church we will become members of. That book is the Bible. It clearly lays down the characteristics of the Lord's church. Thus in selecting a place to worship God we will seek to find a group with these Bible characteristics.

1. First, one should find a church whose only head is Christ. In detailing for us the position of Christ toward the church the Bible states, "And he is the head of the body, the church . . ." (Colossians 1:18). The word of God nowhere informs us that any man was ever given the headship of the church. Those religious groups who have exalted men, conferences, synods and conventions to the work of law-making for the church cannot suit men who desire to select a church governed solely by Christ, its head.

The head of the church, Christ, caused His apostles to record His will in the New Testament. Hence, churches of Christ regard the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith and practice. Says one, "Surely you have somebody who determines what you will believe and practice." No, not any human being. "But, how can there be any semblance of unity among you?" Members of the church of Christ recognize the authority of Christ and His word and are governed thereby. Should you like to know what the church of the Lord believes on any question the answer may be found in the Bible. We have no other guide. When we thus follow the Scriptures without adding to or taking from, unity prevails in teaching and practice.

2. Second, one should determine if a church wears a Scriptural name, both as individual members and as a collective body, before becoming a member thereof.

The New Testament reveals that the early followers of Christ were known simply as Christians. "... And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). In the language of Peter we find further support for the practice of wearing the name Christian. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:15-16). You cannot glorify God by wearing some other name than Christian according to this positive command.

In wearing the name Christian one honors Christ. To wear a human name honors man. In the years that have elapsed since Christianity's inception men, in rebellion to corruption and apostasy, have arisen protesting the same. Such reformers have won public acclaim and often in spite of their own desires, have found their followers calling themselves after their names.

Unfortunately the masses are not content to be called simply Christians. They want to be a certain kind of Christians. But Christ's people wear only His name. They have no denominational handle attached; they are Christians only and only Christians.

We are told that there is nothing in a name. If this is correct, why did God change Abram's name to Abraham? (Genesis 17:5). Why did Paul condemn human and divisive names in the Corinthian church? (I Corinthians 1:10-13). If there is nothing in a name why did Peter declare that there is salvation only in the name of Jesus? (Acts 4:12).

When Paul referred to a number of congregations of Christians he said, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16). The people who bring this program to you regularly are content with the same designation. Are you?

3. Third, in selecting a church one must learn if its worship is Scriptural. It is often argued by men, "We all worship the same God, so there is no cause for alarm concerning our religious divisions." True, most men in our country worship the same God but unfortunately they do not worship the same God in the same way.

Obviously the manner of worship is equally as important as the God to whom it is directed, for Jesus said: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Christ instructs men to worship God but likewise points out the necessity of worshipping Him in a certain way. But if it does not matter how men worship, then it follows that it does not matter whom men worship. The same Bible that regulates the person to whom our worship should be directed also regulates the manner thereof. If the one can be discarded so may the other. But since Bible lovers want to follow its directions they will give serious thought to the worship of the church with whom they become identified. Consider two illustrations:

In the New Testament period men ate the Lord's supper each first day of the week. Paul spent a Lord's Day in Troas on one occasion, but Luke states that the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread. That is, to eat the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). This they would have done whether Paul had been present or not for it was their regular custom, but since Paul was present he preached to them. Now in searching for the right church one must find a group which follows this apostolic example of eating the Lord's supper each Sunday.

The early church sang praises to God for so they were instructed.

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). We have never found a scriptural instance where the early disciples used a mechanical instrument in worship. When such instruments were available, we cannot but believe that some scriptural command, inference or example would have been placed in the sacred scripture had God intended they be used. The Bible doesn't allow for their inclusion; we are specifically commanded to sing.

4. Fourth, in selecting a church under whose influence you may rear your family, to honor and fear God, you must find a group which offers to sinners the same plan of salvation which prevailed in the first century under the preaching of heaven guided men.

But what was the manner in which sinners of the first century were rescued from the threat of eternal ruin? Take some of the conversions concerning which we may read in the book of Acts. The three thousand on Pentecost, according to the second chapter, heard Peter fearlessly proclaim Christ as the resurrected, glorified Son of God and Savior of man. Their faith moved them to ask, "What must we do?" Peter responded by saying: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Another case concerned the eunuch who was converted by Philip. On having Christ preached to him, the eunuch inquired, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" The preacher answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." On the confession of his faith in Christ as God's Son he was immersed in water by Philip and thereafter went on back to Ethiopia rejoicing on account of forgiveness thus obtained (Acts 8).

Hence, in the first century after Christ, (1) sinners heard the gospel of Christ proclaimed, (2) believed it, (3) repented of their sins, (4) confessed their faith in Christ, (5) whereupon they were baptized or immersed in water for remission of sins. A church which does not proclaim the same plan of salvation cannot be the one a person will select, if he is to be governed by the Scriptures.

One fact of grave significance should now be written into your mind, that is,

III. CHRIST BUILT AND RECOGNIZES BUT ONE CHURCH.

That this statement is true is seen from:

1. The Lord's promise to build one church. Jesus Christ once declared, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 16:18). Language could not be clearer. Since Jesus promised to build His church—not His churches—we may conclude that He kept His promise and built one only. It therefore follows that somebody else built the others.

2. Again, Christ's blood purchased one church. In Acts 20:28 we

read about "the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood" (RV). How many churches did Christ purchase? Paul answers, "the church of the Lord." Hence, all others exist without the benefit of the Savior's blood.

Friends, if all religious institutions had been divinely founded it would matter little which one you became a member of. But in view of the proposition just established, namely, that the Lord approves but one, it becomes a question of profound moment as to whether you are a member of it or not.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, there is in your country just the kind of church for which men who love truth are seeking. I belong to it and so do many others. Some of the reasons which led us to become members of this church were those we have enumerated and discussed, namely:

1. Christ alone is its head.
2. It wears a Scriptural name.
3. Its worship is derived from and guided by a "thus saith the Lord."
4. Its terms of membership are identical with those proclaimed by inspired preachers in the first century after Christ.

If you have not selected a church in which to work for God and render due service and worship will these characteristics of the churches of Christ commend themselves to your serious thought? If you have already selected a church, a study of the New Testament church may convince you that you need to select another—the Lord's church. If we may study this important question with you further please command our services for we stand ready to serve. Indeed this is our aim. I thank you.

THE CHURCH AND ITS PLACE IN MAN'S SALVATION

By GUY N. WOODS

Radio Sermon No. 186

August 21, 1955

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say

also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-19).

In this striking fashion did the sacred writer chronicle our Lord's announcement of His intention to build the church, an announcement which He delivered to His disciples in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, to which secluded spot He had journeyed with them for a brief season of retirement and rest following the marvelous miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Having propounded the query, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" and, as is ever the case when matters are left to human opinion, having received conflicting replies, He directed the question pointedly to the disciples, asking, in effect this: "Who do you—who have been privileged to be associated with me for nearly three years and have witnessed my miracles and heard my teaching—say that I the Son of man am?" The fisherman disciple, always impulsive and impetuous, quickly made reply: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In response to this acknowledgment of His deity, Jesus gave utterance to a statement which, through the years, has come to be regarded as one of the most significant in all the scriptures. "I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

This statement is significant, not only because of the lessons of life which it teaches, but because of the great controversies which have raged about it. For many centuries it has been a battle-ground where countless theological battles have been fought; and through the years more things of a controversial nature have been written about it than any other passage in the Bible.

It is, for example, alleged that our Lord here declared His intention of building His church on Peter, and thus is inferred the primacy of that disciple. Those who so maintain, direct attention to the fact that the word **Peter** is translated from the Greek **petros**; the word **rock** from **petra**—obviously of the same derivation; and the conclusion is then drawn that it was the Lord's design to teach that Peter is the rock upon which the church was erected.

This argument, often made, and with great confidence advanced, breaks under the test of investigation. In the first place, the words differ in gender. **Petros**, translated **Peter**, in the passage, is masculine gender; whereas, **petra**, rendered **rock**, in the English versions, is feminine. To exhibit the distinctions in gender, one might expand the passage thus: "Peter you are a he-rock, but upon this she-rock I will build my church . . ." Thus understood, and correctly so, one could never properly conclude that the church was built on the impetuous apostle. Moreover, the words, **Petros**, and **petra** differ in meaning.

Petros, translated **Peter**, signifies a fragment from a larger rock; while **petra**, rendered **rock**, by the translators, denotes a solid bed-rock, a massive foundation. It follows, therefore that, far from declaring it to be His intention to build the church on Peter, He said, in effect, this: "Peter, you are only a tiny rock, comparatively speaking; not upon you, but upon the massive bed-rock of truth which you have confessed,—the acknowledgement of my deity,—I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Of additional significance are the great lessons which our Savior teaches in this remarkable announcement. It will be observed that He speaks of the church which He here declares His intention to build in the future tense: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Here, for the first time in the sacred writings, the church is mentioned; and in this, its first occurrence, it is spoken of as yet future. These words were uttered approximately six months before His death on the cross. Yet here, in the shadow of the tragic events of Gethsemane and Calvary, our Lord speaks of the church as yet in the future. This is indeed significant, in view of the claims of much of the religious world today that the church was then in existence, and had been for many years. Some, for example, affirm that it began before creation; others, during the life of the patriarch Abraham; and many, at some point during the public ministry of Jesus, but all at a time prior to the utterance of these words in Caesarea Philippi. Were we to say, "Upon this vacant lot I will build my house," and our words were misinterpreted as are these words of our Lord, it would doubtless be insisted that not only is the house of which we speak already in existence, but that we have been occupying it for some time! Let it be noted, please, that our Lord, shortly before His death, spoke of the church in the future tense.

Not only did He refer to the church in the future tense, the reference is also in the possessive case: "Upon this rock I will build my church . . ." It is, then, Christ's church, or more euphoniously, as Paul puts it in Romans 16:16: "The churches of Christ salute you." It is His, first by virtue of the fact that He purchased it with His own blood. Of this wondrous truth Paul bore witness when, to the elders of Ephesus, he said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops to feed the church of the Lord which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Over this church thus purchased, He exercises sovereignty as supreme head, a fact we learn from an affirmation in the Ephesian letter which reads: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). His, by right of purchase, the purchase price being His own precious blood, He is also its chief executive, its exalted ruler and guide.

But not only did He speak of the church in the future tense, and make reference thereto in the possessive case, He also alluded to it in the passage before us in the singular number. "Upon this rock I will build my church"—church, singular, not churches, in the sense of

organizations differing in doctrine and practice from one another. Thus is indisputably taught here the essential unity of the church which the Lord built, and the intimate relationship which He sustains to it as head thereof.

Immediately following the announcement we have been considering, Matthew, the sacred historian, informs us that Jesus began "to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21). Already, clouds ominous and threatening were on the horizon, obstacles seemingly insurmountable were in His path, and the future was grim and foreboding. Soon, He was to turn His face toward Jerusalem, and experience the sombre and heart-breaking events of Calvary. The vicious taunts of the mob, the bitter sorrows of Gethsemane, and the excruciating pain of the cross did not deter Him. These He would undergo, and more; such would not and could not, thwart His plans nor defeat His purpose announced. In spite of the fact that He would pass through the Hadean gates and His body would, for a time, rest in the tomb, up from the grave He would triumphantly arise, and make good the promise vouchsafed to His beloved disciples in the distant coasts of rock-ribbed Caesarea Philippi.

It is a matter of sacred historic record that this He did; and, on the first Pentecost day following His triumphant resurrection from the tomb, an account of which is thrillingly related in Acts 2, the church came into being, and sinners were, for the first time under the Great Commission and in the Christian dispensation, privileged to hear the gospel preached and to have salvation offered them in the name of Christ. Among those were some who had participated in the crucifixion about fifty-three days before; and, when the awful truth dawned upon them that they were guilty of the death of the Lord, they were cut to the heart and cried out in agony of soul, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter quickly replied: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37, 38).

They were not slow to act upon this offer of amnesty from heaven; and we are informed by the historian of the early church that those who "gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). And, the narrative of that day's remarkable events is concluded with the observation that the Lord "added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). It is of great significance that here, for the first time in all the scriptures, it is said that people were inducted into the church; and the reason is obvious: on that day—the first Pentecost day following the resurrection—the church of our Lord came into existence.

That this institution was henceforth intended by our Lord to be the sphere of those who are saved, follows from the fact that the conditions on which salvation is obtained are those on the basis of which He adds to the church. It is clearly affirmed by Luke in his

chronicle of the glorious events of that great day that salvation and church membership were contemporary blessings. Neither is enjoyed nor possessed without the other. Forgiveness of sins is in the body of Christ. So testified Paul to the church in Colosse: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13, 14). But, the body of Christ is the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Since forgiveness of sins is only in the body of Christ; and, since the body of Christ is the church, it follows that forgiveness of sins is only in the church.

Which church? one may well ask.

We might, with equal propriety, counter by asking: "Which Lord should we acknowledge, and to which Savior shall we confess allegiance?" If, in answer thereto, it be replied that there is but one Lord, and therefore no choice to be exercised, we answer, "Exactly so;" and the same passage of scripture which teaches us that there is but one Lord, teaches as clearly that there is but one New Testament church! May we consider it? The passage to which we allude is Ephesians 4:4-6, which reads: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Affirmed here is the fact that there is but one body, and but one Lord. Inasmuch as the sacred writer has informed us that there is but one body, it is in order to inquire, "But what is that one body?" We have already cited it: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Head over what? The church. The church which is what? His body. What is His body? The church! The matter is thus settled. There is but one body as there is but one Lord. But this one body is the church. Therefore, since there is but one body; and, since this one body is the church, it follows that there is but one New Testament church! It is hence no more incongruous to speak of a plurality of Lords than it is to maintain that there is a multiplicity of churches.

To this it may be replied that the reasoning is correct, and the conclusion drawn, a scriptural one; but, the one body of which we speak must be a vast invisible church and to be distinguished from any visible, tangible religious body of our time. Despite the fact that this is an exceedingly popular concept, we must, in candor, reject it. The scriptures are silent with reference either to visible or invisible churches. Such phraseology was never resorted to by any of the inspired penmen. Moreover, such a concept is opposed to the nature of the organization of the church as it is revealed to us in the Bible. The church may properly be defined as "a body of baptized believers over which Christ rules and reigns as head, and in which the Spirit dwells." It follows, therefore, that the church is as visible as that of which it is composed; and, inasmuch as it is composed of baptized believers, it can be regarded properly as an organism made up of visible members in so far as the earth is concerned.

If, then, salvation is to be possessed only in the New Testament

church; if there is but one such institution; and it is visible, which denomination is it? Here, we meet with one of the most stubborn concepts of our time: the persistent conviction that the church is a denomination which men may join very much as they would a fraternal order or social club. Indeed, the popular view is that one "gets saved," and then, "joins the church of his choice," concepts which, despite their widespread acceptance, are neither taught nor hinted at in all the scriptures. "Getting saved," is at best, a very awkward way of describing the process which occurs in salvation; and the phrase, "joining the church" does not occur in the Bible, nor is the idea which it conveys to be found there.

As evidence of the persistence with which this concept is maintained, we were once approached by a man who asked: "To what church do you belong?"

"To the church about which you read in the Bible," we replied.

"Of course," he answered. "But with what group of people do you work and worship?"

"With those who are members of the church about which we read in the Bible," we rejoined.

"But," he persisted, "what religious organization are you identified with?"

Again, as patiently as possible, we explained: "With that organization identified as the church of our Lord about which you read in the Bible."

He thought for a moment, his brow knitted in perplexity, and he then said, "Well, tell me this: What kind of a church building do you preach in?"

We did not say so, but we might properly have replied: "We preach in those church buildings where Christians meet for worship who are members of the church about which you read in the Bible!"

Unfortunately, his mind was saturated with the denominational theory which alleges that one, through his own volition, and by exercising a choice, becomes a member of a church. His was the popular theory of joining the church of one's choice.

It is impossible for one to join the church of the Bible. We have already seen that the Lord adds to the church those whom He saves, and the matter of church membership is thus out of our hands. Man cannot do that which is alone the Lord's prerogative. There is a vast difference in the two concepts. In joining the church, one is active; in being added, one is passive. One who joins performs the act himself; in being added, the act is of the Lord. Joining is thus a human act; being added a divine one. When one joins a church he identifies himself with a human institution; in being added by the Lord, membership is enjoyed in the church for which the Savior died.

If, then, salvation is only in the body of Christ; and, the body of Christ is the church; and, this church is a visible institution; and,

there is but one; and it is not a denomination; how, amid the conflicting and contradictory claims today being made may it be identified?

Were one looking for a man by the name of John Smith six feet in height and weighing two hundred pounds, and should contact an individual named Bill Jones, five feet, eight inches in height, and weighing only one hundred fifty pounds, does he exclaim, "I have found my man," and terminate the search?

Indeed not.

He will continue to look until he has found the man possessing the characteristics which identify him from all others on earth.

The church of the New Testament may be similarly identified by its distinctive and peculiar characteristics, — characteristics which it alone possesses.

Our Lord provided, in the Great Commission, that the apostles and all others henceforth to labor under it were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, the terms being faith, repentance, confession and baptism in water, into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, upon confession of faith in Him. In keeping with the instructions thus given, Peter, on the occasion of the first public proclamation thereof commanded men who already believed to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Thus faith, repentance, confession and baptism in water for the remission of sins were the conditions of pardon proclaimed to sinners by the infant church.

Those who complied with these conditions were, by the Lord, added to the church.

The church to which they were added was Christ's church, or in more euphonious fashion, and regarded in its collective capacity, "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16).

The members thereof were called Christians (Acts 11:26). We pause to observe that often today there are those who affect to be Christians but who are called by some other name. It will be noted that these not only claimed to be Christians; this is what they were called. Peter admonished, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16, ASV).

It was a characteristic of the early church to meet regularly on the first day of every week, a fact noted by Paul when he urged the disciples in the church in Corinth to avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them to give as they have been prospered (I Corinthians 16:2).

On the occasion of such regularly scheduled Lord's day meetings,

the church observed the Lord's Supper. Such is affirmed in connection with Paul's visit to Troas (Acts 20:7).

In candor and kindness we are, in the light of these facts, disposed to ask, "If one belongs to a religious institution which does not teach, faith, repentance, confession and baptism in water for the remission of sins, as did the early church; if one must join it in order to obtain membership therein instead of being added to it by the Lord; if it is designated by some name unknown to the sacred writings; if the members are called some other name than that of Christian; and, if it does not meet regularly on the first day of the week for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper, how could one seriously and candidly claim to be a member of the church of which the Savior spoke, when, in the long ago, in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he said to the little band of disciples which had gathered about Him in the rugged regions to which He had gone, "Upon on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it?"

Our plea, then, is for the New Testament church, without addition, without subtraction, without modification. Accepting no creed but Christ, no rule of faith and practice but the New Testament, content to do Bible things in Bible ways, and to call Bible things by Bible names, it is our conviction that we have succeeded in restoring to the twentieth century the church of the first century. On this basis we ask your candid consideration. Will you not cooperate with us in such an endeavor?

THE BIBLE

By W. B. WEST, JR.

Radio Sermon No. 187

August 28, 1955

Scripture Reading: Psalms 19:7-11—"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: in keeping them there is great reward." The word "Bible" is the equivalent of the Greek word *biblia*, meaning originally books. *Biblia* occurs with its article *ta* in the Septuagint version of Daniel 9:2 for the prophetic writings. It, with its article, was later applied to both the Old and New Testament in a unique and pre-eminent sense, becoming the books of the one supreme book—the book of and from God.

This book or the Bible has been the guide of man for thousands of years; its has been providentially copied and recopied by many hun-

dreds of devoted scribes in order that it might be preserved and transmitted; it has been on the printing press for more than four hundred years and it has been translated into more than a thousand languages and dialects. It continues to be the best seller each year and is the most widely read and studied book in Western Civilization. Its influence on mankind cannot be measured. Its beneficent and guiding star will never set. When eternity will break again into time, the Bible still will be guiding and comforting men. Whence this wonderful book and what is its nature?

I. The Bible is From God—Inspired by Him

The term inspire has latitude of meaning. For example, on a clear night when one looks into the sky as it is a blaze of brilliant diamonds against a deep blue curtain, with one star differing from another star in glory, presenting a ceiling of unsurpassed beauty, he is inspired as he is moved by the beauties and wonders of the heavens. A painter may stand on a western hill and look across vast stretches of open plains to a beautiful sunset in the golden west and be inspired to paint a picture of great beauty. One may see the Himalayas of fascinating India or the towering Alps of picturesque Switzerland, or the grandeur of Grand Canyon or the majesty of Niagara Falls, and be inspired. One may read a great masterpiece in literature, or he may hear a talented and accomplished musician, or listen to an eloquent and convincing speaker, and be inspired. Is this the type of inspiration possessed by the writers of the Bible? Let us study the question.

In II Peter 1:21, we read: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." In this statement Peter had in mind primarily the prophets of the Old Testament. Each of these prophets when he spoke as a prophet was aware that it was not he who was speaking but God through him. In Exodus 35:1, Moses declared: "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded." Isaiah urged: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:2). Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came unto me" (Jeremiah 1:4). Ezekiel declared: "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel" (Ezekiel 1:3). These expressed convictions, with many similar ones in the Old Testament, indicate that men of God in Old Testament times spoke and wrote from God, "being moved by the Holy Spirit." Thus was the Old Testament written by men of God, speaking from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Near the end of His ministry, Jesus announced His imminent departure from His apostles. In lieu of His presence, He promised them: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17). This Comforter or Spirit of truth would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them and would guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). This Comforter came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus in the person of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. He, the Holy Spirit, guided the apostles into all truth and brought to their remem-

brance all that Jesus Christ had said unto them. This guidance was with them and their immediate associates as they wrote the New Testament.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the gospel: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16, 17). The word "inspired" in this passage is a direct predicate of the written Scriptures, affirming that quality of divinity in them, by virtue of which they are "profitable" for the great needs for which they are given. This quality comes from without. The phrase "inspired of God" here used by Paul is a translation of the Greek word *Theopneustos* which identifies the quality without as God and signifies the divine source of inspiration which is God.

We have learned thus far that both the Old and New Testament writers were inspired of God and that all inspired Scripture is profitable. What is meant by inspiration? We have seen that inspiration comes from an influence from without a person who is inspired whether that influence be from another person or in the heavens a ceiling of unsurpassed beauty, a gorgeous sunset, or some other handiwork of God. Does the inspiration which possessed the writers of the Bible differ from that which comes naturally by beauty or eloquence? It does differ as far as the east is from the west. The inspiration of Biblical writers was unique in that they possessed the Holy Spirit and were inerrantly guided in writing the Bible, since they were inspired of God.

II. The Bible Is the Eternal Word of God.

It has been affirmed that it is temporal. There are some who believe there is no place for it in our scientific age. In the past, many attempts have been made to destroy it but it is still here.

At the turn of the fourth century of our era, the Roman emperor, Diocletian, decreed death for any person in the Roman Empire who owned a copy of the Bible. He later boasted: "I have completely exterminated the Christian writings from the face of the earth." Some years later when Constantine became emperor he asked Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, if he could locate some copies of the Bible. Within twenty-five hours he found fifty copies.

Voltaire, the French skeptic of the eighteenth century, boasted that within fifty years the only Bibles to be found would be in the large museums of the earth. It is reported that within a short time after his death the press used to print his writings was employed to print Bibles and the house from which his writings were distributed was used by the Geneva Bible Society for the distribution of Bibles.

Where is Diocletian and where is Voltaire? They are gone and their influence is scarcely felt. Since Voltaire lived hundreds of critics and enemies of the Bible have endeavored to destroy its influence, some of whom have hoped for its annihilation. Through the centuries its enemies have come and gone, their works are little known, while the

Bible is still here, known, loved and read by increasing millions as the years come and go. A poet of another generation has said:

I stood beside the blacksmith's open door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
And gazing in I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn out with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all the hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, "the anvil wears the hammer out you
know."
So I thought of the anvil of God's word
Which for ages sceptic blows have beat upon
The anvil unharmed; the hammers gone.

Books come and books go but the Bible lives on. The best seller today is a back number tomorrow. A best seller may come back temporarily but soon will disappear from the book shelves of up-to-date book sellers. Many years ago, just after Margaret Mitchell had written *Gone With The Wind*, I stood on the bottom floor of a large department store in a great mid-western city and saw hundreds of people leave the store having purchased copies of *Gone With The Wind*. That was only a part of the sales that day in that large city. What has happened to *Gone With The Wind*? It has gone or will go with the wind regardless of its good merits. Such has been, is, and will be the history of books produced by men. Only the book of God, the Bible, will live through the mutations of time.

Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." These words are recorded in the New Testament. The Bible will outlive the heavens and the earth. When the sea is no more, when the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, and the heavens will be rolled up as a scroll, the Bible will be here.

Beyond the Saturday evening of time, on the plains of eternal judgment, the Bible will be opened and from its pages you and I and the multiplied billions of earth will be judged. Jesus said: "This word that I speak unto you will judge you at the last day" (John 12:48).

The Bible is eternal. It is here to stay. It will be here when time is no more and beyond time in eternity.

III. The Bible Is All Sufficient.

As earlier quoted, the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (II Timothy 3:16, 17). Note "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" by the Bible and not by the creeds of men.

Books other than the Bible are limited in that they are concerned

with one subject. Definitive books have been written by authorities in various fields such as science, history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, literature, language, and vocational guidance. Usually these books are excellent and their authors are to be commended but they are limited to the study of one area of life. It is not so with the Bible. It treats every relationship of life either indirectly or directly and concerns itself with the age-long and great questions of life.

Men have always asked: "Whence came the universe and from whence did man come?" The only true answer to these questions is in the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man has also always been concerned with his duty on earth and has learned that it is to fear God and to keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

In the Bible man learns of the great Hebrew people through whom the Messiah of the world came. All the prophets of the Old Testament told of His coming and converged their telescopes on His star which was to rise over Bethlehem of Judea. In the Gospels the story of His wonderful life is told. In the Book of Acts men and women are informed concerning the establishment and identity of the church and how to become Christians or followers of Christ. This they do by belief in Him, repentance from past sins, the confession of their faith in Him before men, and their burial in the waters of baptism for the remission of their sins. Letters to churches and to individual Christians follow the Book of Acts, telling men and women how to live the Christial life.

There is not a relationship of life for which the Bible is not relevant. Obedience to its teachings will make a man or a woman what he or she ought to be; it will make a home Christian; a community ideal; a state and a nation a servant of God. Obedience to the Golden Rule will cause men to "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks"; and to learn war no more.

Not only is the Bible all sufficient in precept or principle for all of life, it is the only book upon which we can rely in the hour of death, to which we will all come. In this hour, the Christian can say with David: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4). In this hour of triumph the Christian can exclaim with Paul: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (I Corinthians 15: 54, 55).

For the life beyond death it is to the all-sufficient Bible the Christian goes. He reads: "For we know that if this the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5:1). On Patmos Isle by faith the Christian can hear the beloved John say:

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne say-

ing, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more (Revelation 21:2-4).

This same all-sufficient Bible tells of the destiny of the unsaved beyond death. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord while the children of God will be in His blissful presence throughout eternity. These children will live in that land and city of which the all-sufficient Bible tells. It will be a land of endless delight and a city where there is no night. The pastures of that land will be forever green and the streets of that city will be transparent gold with walls of jasper and gates of pearl.

What a wonderful book is the Bible to tell us of such a wonderful place as heaven. What a wonderful book is the Bible—an all-sufficient book, uniquely inspired of God and more eternal than the heavens. Will you join with me in saying with the poet?

Blessed Bible! how I love it;
How it doth my spirit cheer.
What hath earth like this to covet;
O what stores of wealth are here.

Man was lost and doomed to sorrow,
Not one ray of light or bliss;
Could he from earth's treasure borrow,
Till his way was cheered by this.

Blessed Bible! I will hide thee,
Deep, yes deeper in my heart.
Thou through all my life shalt guide me,
And in death, we will not part.

Part in death! No, never, never
Through death's vale I'll lean on thee.
Then in brighter worlds forever,
Sweeter still thy truths shall be.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

July, 1955

RECEIPTS

Paid on Pledges	\$16,877.85
Contributions	6,919.22
Transcriptions	<u>325.00</u>

Total Receipts for July	\$24,122.07
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EXPENDITURES

Broadcasting Expense:

Tape Recording	\$ 1,019.39	
Radio Time	<u>23,012.96</u>	\$24,032.35

Wages	3,245.00
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Office Expense:

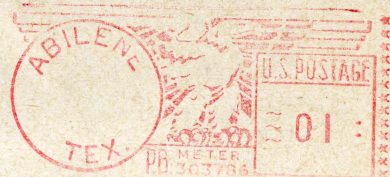
Postage	129.60	
Social Security	44.90	
Office Supplies	41.75	
Printing	10.00*	
Utilities	17.86	
Tel. & Tel.	53.79	
Rent	150.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>49.88</u>	497.78

TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>\$27,775.13</u>
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EXPENDITURES EXCEED RECEIPTS BY.....\$ 3,653.06

*Most of this month's printing expense will be included in next statement.

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